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Question of East Timor

Letter dated 12 August 1998 from the Permanent Representative of Austria to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

I have the honour to draw your attention to the statement issued on 12 August 1998 by the Presidency of the European Union concerning East Timor.

I should be grateful if you would have the text of this letter and its annex circulated as a document of the General Assembly.

(*Signed*) Ernst **Sucharipa**
Permanent Representative of Austria
to the United Nations

* A/53/150.

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Annex

[Original: English and French]

Statement on East Timor issued on 12 August 1998 by the Presidency of the European Union

The European Union has noted with satisfaction the results achieved at the meeting between the Secretary-General of the United Nations and the Foreign Ministers of Indonesia and Portugal on the question of East Timor, held in New York on 4 and 5 August 1998. It expresses its appreciation of the constructive spirit which prevailed at this meeting, and commends the Secretary-General and his Personal Representative, Ambassador Jamsheed Marker, for the key role they played in achieving this result.

The European Union welcomes the Ministers' agreement to enter into in-depth negotiations on issues related to the question of East Timor, addressed in the final communiqué of the meeting, without prejudice to their basic positions of principle.

Recalling the conclusions of the Council of 13 July 1998, it hopes that these negotiations will lead to a just, comprehensive and internationally acceptable solution in the near future.

The European Union also notes with satisfaction the prospect for closer involvement of the East Timorese in the search for a solution. The European Union takes note of the recent reduction in troop numbers and encourages the Indonesian Government to further reduce its military presence in East Timor. It calls upon the Indonesian Government to expedite the release of East Timorese political prisoners, including Xanana Gusmão.

The European Union welcomes the Ministers' agreement to establish interest sections in each other's capitals by the end of 1998.

The Central and Eastern European countries and Cyprus associated with the European Union and the European Free Trade Association countries Iceland and Norway, members of the European Economic Area, align themselves with this statement.